

26 June 2015

**Mel Hillyard receives the J.P. Morgan Emerging Director Award 2015**

Mel Hillyard has been chosen as the recipient of the J.P. Morgan Emerging Director Award 2015, winning the chance to stage a production in an established London fringe venue and a place at the National Theatre Studio in order to gain professional expertise and industry contacts. She will take up the position of Resident Director in the New Work department at the NT Studio from August, and direct a show at the Orange Tree Theatre, which is partnering the Award, in March 2016.

**Paul Miller, Artistic Director of the Orange Tree Theatre,** commented**:**

“*I’m delighted that Mel Hillyard is the recipient of this year’s J.P. Morgan Award. She is an exceptionally gifted young director with very exciting ideas. We can’t wait to welcome her to the Orange Tree to direct here in 2016.”*

**Emily McLaughlin, Head of New Work, National Theatre** added**:**

*“The Award panel were hugely impressed by Mel’s passion for her craft and her commitment to new writing. We had the privilege of making a decision from an extremely strong field, so our thanks go to all the directors who took part in the first and second rounds. We look forward very much to working with Mel in the New Work Department, and to collaborating with the Orange Tree Theatre over the next year.”*

**Mel Hillyard responded:**

*“I am thrilled to have won this award. To be working at the National Theatre Studio at this particular time is hugely exciting. Developing new work is where my passion lies and I feel privileged to join the team under Rufus Norris' helm.*
*“Being able to direct my own show at the Orange Tree Theatre is an honour. Over the last year, Paul Miller has made it a powerhouse for both new work and revivals. I hope to add to the important work that is being staged and continue to bring a new audience to the streets of Richmond.”*

Mel’s directing credits include: *Love and Information* (The Caird Theatre), *Hamlet, The Secret Nuclear Bunker* (East 15), *One Million Tiny Plays About Britain* (Young Vic), *Little Finds Richmix* (SoundBites), *What’s Inside My Box* (DryWrite at The Bush), *Hard Shoulders* (Latitude Festival), *Even Stillness Breathes Softly Against a Brick Wall* (Theatre 503), *In An Instant* (Latitude Festival and Theatre 503), *The Spit of Me* (Southwark Playhouse), *Barebones* (Old Red Lion), *Seppuku* (Arcola), *His Face Her Face*, *Three Is Company* (King’s Head), *Grey Days* (Edinburgh Festival), *Loose Ends* (Café Royal, Edinburgh). She has also acted as Associate, Assistant or Staff Director at the National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, Hampstead Theatre and Theatre Royal, Stratford East.

Ends

Notes to Editors

**Orange Tree Theatre**

The Orange Tree Theatre was founded in 1972 above the Orange Tree pub and moved its present premises in 1991. Over its 42-year history the Orange Tree has had a strong track record in discovering writers and promoting their early work, as well as re-discovering artists from the past whose work had either been disregarded or forgotten. In July 2014, Paul Miller succeeded Sam Walters as Artistic Director.

The Orange Tree aims to challenge, move and amaze with a bold and continually evolving mix of new and re-discovered plays in our unique in-the-round space;

to change lives by telling remarkable stories from a wide variety of times and places, filtered through the singular imagination of our writers and the remarkable close-up presence of our actors;

to use our 172-seat in-the-round theatre and its buildings in ways that widen and deepen the circles of people both experiencing and creating our work, opening the space to people of ever more diverse backgrounds and ages.

**The National Theatre**

The National Theatre is dedicated to making the very best theatre and sharing it with as many people as possible. We produce up to 30 productions at our South Bank home each year, ranging from re-imagined classics – such as Greek tragedy and Shakespeare – to modern masterpieces and new work by contemporary writers and theatre-makers. The work we make strives to be as open, as diverse, as collaborative and as *national* as possible. We want to inspire artists and audiences to think in new ways, to constantly re-imagine the act of making theatre. The newly formed New Work Department is housed at the NT Studio and brings together the combined resource of the Literary Department and the Studio into an engine room for the development of new work for all the National Theatre’s stages and beyond; we are committed to nurturing innovative work from new writers, directors, creative artists and performers.

The National Theatre is a J.P. Morgan sponsorship partner and is supported by Arts Council England.

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